Free ice fishing weekend

Mark February 13-14, 2010 on your calendar as Michigan's free ice fishing weekend!

All fishing license fees are waived for residents and out-of-state visitors alike on both inland and Great Lakes waters. All fishing regulations will still apply. Visit www.michigan.gov/dnr for more information about ice fishing and shanty regulations.

Follow general fishing conditions across the state via the Weekly Fishing Report at www.michigan.gov/dnr; click on Fishing on the left sidebar, or call 517-373-0908.

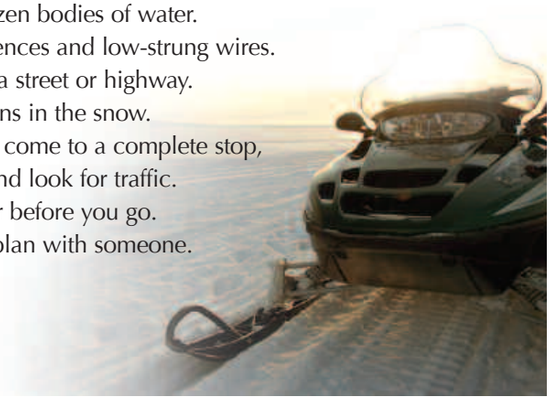
Nofs encourages snowmobile safety

Snowmobiling is a great, outdoor winter sport, yet there were 22 fatalities in Michigan last season. That's a loss of life both tragic and preventable.

Excess speed and alcohol were contributing factors. Keep in mind that any amount of alcohol impairs perception and slows reaction time. Always be sure to operate your machine at safe and reasonable speeds.

The DNR offers more safe riding hints, including:

- Keep your machine in top mechanical condition.
- Wear insulated boots and clothing, including a helmet and gloves.
- Never ride alone.
- Avoid crossing frozen bodies of water.
- Be alert to avoid fences and low-strung wires.
- Never operate on a street or highway.
- Look for depressions in the snow.
- At an intersection, come to a complete stop, raise off the seat and look for traffic.
- Check the weather before you go.
- Leave your travel plan with someone.



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Michigan SNOWMOBILE and Safety Guide

State Senator
Mike Nofs
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909 -7536

MICHIGAN

SNOWMOBILE and SAFETY GUIDE

Winter 2010

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Dear Michigan Snowmobiler:

I can't think of a better place to enjoy the full beauty and wonder of winter than right here in Michigan!

One of the best ways to experience this exhilarating season is on a snowmobile. With a network of 6,200 miles of groomed trails and exciting terrain, snowmobiling in Michigan provides unparalleled fun. The sport also pumps $1 billion annually into our state economy.

For novices and old hands alike, it's important to keep this family-friendly activity safe. This guide offers some helpful tips for snowmobile safety along with interesting legislative news. You can find additional information and keep up-to-date on rules, regulations and more at www.michigan.gov/dnr.

I hope you and your family enjoy a safe and fun snowmobiling season. As always, if my office can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me toll-free at **1-888-962-6275** or by e-mail at **senmnofs@senate.michigan.gov**.

Happy Trails!

Mike Nofs

Mike Nofs
State Senator

Senate protects land and trail access

Michigan snowmobilers led the charge last year to ensure the continued quality and stability of the state's snowmobile trail network.

The Legislature heeded a grassroots call to head off a $1 million shortfall in the snowmobile program for the 2009-10 season by enacting a plan to generate more revenue through an increase in user fees.

Public Act 399 of 2008 increases the snowmobile registration and renewal fees from $22 to $30 to help the state purchase permanent easements. The registration is good for three years. Half of the snowmobile trails in Michigan are located on private property and subject to annual negotiations. Purchasing permanent easements on public trails will help stabilize the entire snowmobile trail system and ensure future access to the trails.

Public Act 400 of 2008 increases the snowmobile trail permit sticker fee to cover the increasing costs of grooming and maintaining snow trails so they remain safe, smooth and first tier.

Resources on the web

- Check the most current trail and weather reports and keep up with a statewide Calendar of Events at **www.msasnow.org**.
- Find a snowmobile safety class at **www.michigan.gov/dnr** and click on recreational safety classes on the right sidebar.
- Communication is an important part of safe snowmobiling. Learn approved hand signals at **www.snowmobilers.org**.

Michigan Snowmobiling – by the numbers

- Generates more than **$1 billion** per year for Michigan's economy.
- Supports over **7,000** direct jobs.
- Resident snowmobile trips cover **114 million** miles.
- State trail system is **100 percent** self-funded.
- First in North America with **360,000** snowmobile registrations.

Senator Nofs provides Snowmobile Advisory Committee update

I strongly support efforts to "right-size" state government, like the governor's recent decision to merge the departments of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality. In today's economy, government simply must be leaner and more cost-efficient.

However, I was adamantly opposed to other elements of the executive order, namely the elimination of the citizen Snowmobile Advisory Committee (SAC).

The SAC advised the DNR on issues like allocating funds for snowmobile trails, developing training programs and rules for snowmobile use.

This public input, made by people who actually use the snowmobile trail system, not only advanced the sport, but helped Michigan snowmobiling become the economic and winter tourism force it is today. At the same time, this citizen group was entirely self-funded!

The governor's original plan was revised in early December after complaints from citizens across the state. Although Executive Order 2009-54 now expands the new Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council, reserving at least three appointments for snowmobilers, it falls short of the scope and intent of the jettisoned Snowmobile Advisory Council.

"It's vital that snowmobile trail users, who are **100 percent self-funded**, have a strong voice in Michigan." — Senator Mike Nofs